

endeavoured to give some notion of the importance and diversity of our natural products; of the movements of trade; of our great public works and improvements. The triumphs of public spirit and the evidence of enlightenment and taste in its manifestation: signs of progress in art and in technical training; agriculture in all its phases and connections: Northwest ranching and those who conduct it; our great manufacturing concerns and the scenes amid which they flourish—in fine, whatever relates directly or indirectly to our national, social, religious, industrial or commercial life, whatever contributes to our progress or forms a feature in it—all this and much more we deemed to come within the scope of the DOMINION ILLUSTRATED.

As to the letter-press, our contributors, among whom we are proud to number some of Canada's foremost writers, have stood by us nobly, and we take this opportunity of thanking them for their share in our success. They have all heartily sympathized with our aspiration to make Canada known and respected and great by self-knowledge and self-respect. On the whole, we close our first year with the consciousness that, in spite of some grave drawbacks and some serious shortcomings, we have not entirely missed the aim with which we set out, and, with the good-will of our readers and friends, we will begin the new year with undiminished faith in our great country, and the hope, not lessened by experience, that the DOMINION ILLUSTRATED may help to promote its prosperity and magnify its prestige in the eyes of the world.

THE OLD NOR'-WESTERS.

From time to time during the last twelve months we have given illustrations of the posts and forts of the Hudson's Bay Company—that organization which has, directly and indirectly, played so important a part in the development of the Northwest. It ought not, however, to be forgotten that the company, as we know it in recent generations, is really a combination of two important societies—one English, the other Canadian. The story of the former has been briefly told in our columns. It dates back to the year 1670, when Charles II. granted a charter to the merchant adventurers who carried on the fur trade on the shores of Hudson's Bay and appointed Prince Rupert the first governor of the co-partnery. If the privileges conferred by the charter were comprehensive, so also were the responsibilities assumed by the company. One of their tasks was to discover a passage to "the western and southern ocean of America." For this purpose several expeditions were sent out, but without any definite result. In 1749, when a committee of inquiry into the condition of the company was ordered by Parliament, there were only six forts, all on the Bay. A century and a quarter later the number had increased to nearly a hundred and fifty, distributed all over the continent.

To that increase the accession of the Northwest Company had not a little contributed. Even under French rule, Canada had done much towards the exploration of the region west of the great lakes. The *Sieur de la Vérandrye* and his sons had made known the great prairie region before the final struggle between France and Britain began. After the conquest Canadian traders again took up the interrupted task. Montreal was their chief centre of business, and from Montreal the Frobishers, McGillivrays, McTavishes, Frasers and Mackenzies set forth on their quest for new sources of wealth and new routes to the Western ocean.

In 1787 the most important fur firms deemed it well to unite and form a company. The Nor'-Westers, as the members liked to be called, comprised some of the ablest and most influential men of their time. Their services as explorers have only of late begun to be estimated at their true value. Both in the Northwest and in the older provinces—especially since the organization of our Archives Bureau—a good deal has been done towards the elucidation of their researches and discoveries. It has, however, remained for Mr. L. R. Masson, of Terrebonne, to whom had come by inheritance a mass of important documents bearing on it, to treat the subject with the fulness and accuracy which it deserved. His connection with the family of the late Hon. Roderick Mackenzie, cousin of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, made Mr. Masson the possessor of the correspondence between those distinguished kinsmen and of several other manuscripts, equally precious, relating to the membership, aims and operations of the Northwest Company. These the owner has wisely determined to place within reach of the public, and the first volume of the series—a series of the utmost value and interest—has just been issued from the press of Messrs. A. Côté & Co., of Quebec. This volume of nearly 600 pages, consists of two parts. Part first is a general historical sketch of the company till the close (in 1820) of its separate existence, enriched with copious annotations. Part second consists of seven memoirs, journals and reports of eminent Northwesters.

In his historical sketch Mr. Masson, after summarizing the progress of trade, adventure and exploration under the old régime and in the early years of British rule, relates the circumstances to which the Northwest Company owed its origin. He describes the exploits of Henry and Cadotte, the Frobisher brothers, Umfreville, Pond, Quesnel, Pangman, Grant and Leroux, and the great trading houses of Montreal, with their rival ambitions and interests. By the formation of the company Messrs. Frobisher, McTavish, Gregory, McGillivray, the Mackenzies, and others, united their means and energies and became a power in the land. He tells how Alexander Mackenzie became the leading spirit in the Northwest—how, defying all obstacles, he made his way successively to the Boreal and to Pacific ocean. He depicts the jealousy and alarm of the Hudson's Bay Company at the success of its rival and reveals the discords that in 1796 led to the secession of the X. Y.'s. The death of Mr. McTavish in 1804 made it possible for the two sections to reunite. The Astoria interlude, the schemes of Lord Selkirk, the growing dissensions ending in bloodshed, and the compromise which ensued after the reign of disorder—a compromise fatal to the Northwest Company—these successive events are all clearly set forth in Mr. Masson's history.

The remainder—which constitutes the bulk—of the book is devoted to the memoirs and journals already referred to. First we have the "Reminiscences" of the Hon. Roderick Mackenzie, with copious extracts of Sir Alexander's letters to himself. These letters contain some vivid pictures of Northwestern life. The second of the documents is composed of letters from Mr. W. F. Wentzell, a Norwegian in the company's service, to the Hon. Roderick Mackenzie, between the years 1807 and 1824. The "Journal of a Voyage from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast," by Mr. Simon Fraser (1808); the Journal of Mr. F. V. Malhiot in a journey from Fort Kamanaitiquoya to the river Montreal in 1804; An Account of the Red

River Country about 1797, by Mr. John McDonnell; the "Missouri Journal" of Mr. F. A. Larocque, clerk of the company, in 1804-1805, and a Narrative of Four Trading Expeditions to the Missouri, in 1804-1805-1806, by Mr. Charles Mackenzie, which treats largely of the Mandan, Crow, Cheyenne and other Indian tribes, complete the volume. Mr. Charles Mackenzie, like his more distinguished namesake, Sir Alexander, maintains that "Mississippi" is the proper name of the great river which is generally spelled "Missouri." These documents contain a mass of valuable information to be obtained nowhere else, and Mr. Masson merits the gratitude of the public for placing them within reach of historical students. "Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest" will, when the series is complete, be a rich addition to our original sources of knowledge as to Manitoba, the Territories and British Columbia. The story of the gradual conquest of that vast region, of the perils of the explorers, of the rivalries of individuals, of the conflicts of the companies, is intensely interesting.

MILITIA NOTES.

Of the late Lieut.-Colonels Lamontagne and De Bellefeuille the *Militia Gazette* says: "They were both comparatively young men, being several years short of three score. They led useful and honorable lives, and their memories will be fondly cherished by many a brother officer of the force."

The only ten shot highest possible ever made in revolver competition in England was scored in competition at 20 yards by Walter Winans at a meeting of the South London Rifle Club on the 21st May. The revolver used was a Colt, .45 calibre, 4½ lbs., trigger pull, factory ammunition, English army mark 1. M. Winans continuing shooting, put five more shots in the bull, making a string of 15.

Commenting on the popularity of the Queen's Own and other city regiments with the press and public of Toronto, the *Militia Gazette* says: In Montreal there is the same incentive to membership and proficiency in the militia. True, the papers are modest; but it is quite touching to hear the comments of the Montreal citizens, especially the ladies, upon their respective favorites when the corps parade for a holiday review. The number of regiments Montreal supports, and supports handsomely too, is surprising to anyone acquainted with the private expenditure involved.

It is generally regretted that Captain W. S. Russell, of the 45th Battalion, has been compelled by business necessities to withdraw from this year's Wimbledon team. He is a well tried shot, having twice already represented Canada at Wimbledon, and all this season he has been making exceptionally good practice. His place will be taken by another member of the 44th, Pte. J. Horsey, who now goes to Wimbledon for the first time. Had the best men of those eligible gone, Canada would this year have had an exceptionally good chance for the Kolapore cup. Those who refused the proffered places were Captain Hartt, St. John Rifles; Staff-Sergt. Clarke, 53rd; Captain McMicking, 44th; Sergt. Short, G.G.F.G.; Captain Russell, 45th; Pte. Burns, 3rd (formerly 62nd), Captain Corbin, 63rd. The team, nevertheless, will be by no means a bad one.

Captain G. Henry Witthaus, a director of the National Rifle Association of America, well known to riflemen who have visited Creedmoor for several years past, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head May 30. The deceased was a popular New York gentleman, possessing wealth and a host of friends. He was a member of the 9th Regiment of the Old Guard, and belonged to the Hoboken Turtle Club, the Thirteen Club, the Press Club, the Liederkranz and Arion Societies and the Young Men's Democratic Club. He was assistant to Gen. Charles F. Robbins, the Inspector of Rifle Practice for the State of New York, and rendered valuable assistance at Creedmoor as assistant executive officer, his uniform courtesy to the press representatives being well remembered. The deceased was 46 years of age.

The *Army and Navy Gazette* says: "A smokeless powder has been produced at last, so now the only possible objection to the introduction of a heavy quick firing gun for artillery purposes is conclusively removed. Captain Noble, of the Elswick firm at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has invented a powder which appears to be perfectly reliable, and which is at the same time practically smokeless and noiseless in its explosion. The War Office has almost decided upon its use not only for small arms, but, in a modified form, for machine and quick firing guns, and experimental trials are about to be instituted with it at Lydd on a very considerable scale. Noble's powder is a curious greyish-looking material, in long threads or a whipcord-like form, presumably from the shape it assumes while under hydraulic pressure. Its action is most startling. At 300 yards range not a sound is heard when a volley is fired with it, and only a faint haze arises, which is almost imperceptible; whilst a shower of bullets is seen to fall upon the targets, on effect produced seemingly without a cause!"